

7 WAYS

TO SUPERCHARGE
YOUR PRAYERS



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Day Three:

Admit You Don't Know What To Say.

"Lord, I pray Nathan would hold your word in high esteem as the inerrant and infallible word of God. That he would preach it without holding back the difficult parts. That he would have the courage to speak the entire truth boldly."

When a fellow pastor prayed this for me, I was suspicious.

It didn't seem like he talking to God on my behalf. It felt more like coaching and correcting. There were things I was doing he didn't feel were right, he was too timid to tell me to my face, so he hoped I would get the hint when he mentioned it to God. This is called triangulation.

Triangulation is when you bring a third party into a relationship to put additional pressure on someone you are unwilling to confront, or whose behavior you can't control. Too often when groups of Christians pray, they triangulate with God. Sometimes it comes across judgemental (like in the example above). Other times it is innocent like the following:

"Jesus help Mike to remember he is made in your image and is filled with your Spirit to do great things. Help him see you have prepared him, and he is fully trained for this new opportunity he is nervous about."

There is no sting in this last example. But it is still triangulating.

Why not just tell Mike this stuff? Why make it a group therapy session involving God? While it appears innocent, it isn't. Triangulating prayer is lazy, boring, and uncreative prayer because it doesn't involve any attempt to listen to what the Holy Spirit might want you to pray. You just pray what you think makes sense. What makes sense is that since Mike has confessed he is nervous about his new job we pray for confidence. Nathan is preaching an incomplete gospel. We automatically pray he smartens up.

I'm as guilty as anyone of triangulating prayer because I pray out loud in front of groups of people most days of my life. Most of the time in the group there is someone who I wish was doing something different than they currently are. It is very hard to not want to send a message in prayer to people who are listening. To take advantage of a sanctified

coaching platform. But those types of prayers are impotent at best and insulting at worst.

To avoid the mess of triangulating prayers here is what you do- ask the Spirit what you should pray.

Submit to the Spirit's direction. Most of the time when I do this I find my initial prayer intention was off. The script I was forming in my head was well-intentioned, but not Spirit-led. It might vaguely encourage someone, but it doesn't ignite hope in them.

Spirit-led prayer ignites hope and brings transformation.

Stop triangulation by offering a quick "Spirit, guide my prayers" before you begin to pray. And note, while my examples above focused on praying out loud with others, the same principle applies to personal prayer. You can coach yourself and therapeutically journal around in circles. The same principle applies.

Ask the Spirit to guide your prayers.

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, I want to pray. Save me from coaching, correcting, and conniving. Even if I have the best of intentions and deep insights, these still fall short of what you want for the people I am praying for. I submit to your agenda.

Memory Verse:

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

-Romans 8:26-27